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Forum on women in the north
sponsored by The Ontario Status
of Women Council in co-operation
with The Northwestern Ontario
Women's Decade Council

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Ontario

FORUM ON WOMEN IN THE NORTH

SPONSORED BY

THE ONTARIO STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL

IN CO-OPERATION WITH

THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S DECADE COUNCIL

September 15-16, 1984

Dryden, Ontario

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS



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FORUM ON WOMEN IN THE NORTH

September 15-16, 1984

Dryden, Ontario

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

The forum was opened by Leni Untinen, Co-ordinator for the Northwestern Ontario (NWO) Women's Decade Council, who clarified the arrangements and announced changes to the agenda. Ms. Untinen introduced Elizabeth Poulin, President of the NWO Women's Decade Council, who welcomed delegates, recognized the contribution of those who had organized the forum and acknowledged the financial assistance provided by the Ontario Women's Directorate.

Before introducing Eleanor Ryan, head of the Ontario Status of Women Council Committee on Women in the North and Chairperson for the forum, Ms. Poulin emphasized the importance of both the briefs and the networking that would occur naturally between and after the sessions.

Ms. Ryan introduced the Ontario Status of Women Council (OSWC) members present and conveyed appreciation for the opportunity to hear the concerns of northern women. With respect to follow-up, she noted that a report would be prepared from the forum transcript and sent to the Honourable Robert Welch, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. The report and copies of the briefs would also be sent to each Minister responsible for issues raised. As well, both the report and individual briefs would be available from the OSWC office to delegates and others upon request. In addition, the briefs themselves would be studied by the relevant OSWC committees. After these remarks, Ms. Ryan invited presentation of the briefs.

WOMEN & EDUCATION (POST-SECONDARY):

A brief presented by Mary Fedorchuk,
Confederation College, Thunder Bay

Ms. Fedorchuk began by describing the attitudes of typical full-time female students entering Confederation College directly from high school. She noted that because their expectations of life are unrealistic, their career aspirations are temporary; consequently, they are failing to develop their human potential. "By charting their destiny according to the traditional gender patterns...girls have been educated for poverty" and very little of what they have been exposed to in their early schooling has encouraged them to do otherwise.

September 12-18, 1984

Ottawa, Ontario

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

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ACTION (POST-SESSIONARY):

A brief presented by Mary Tedoruk,
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WOMEN & EDUCATION (POST-SECONDARY):

To redress this situation, Ms. Fedorchuk offered a number of recommendations.

She suggested:

- that gender bias in teacher behaviour be addressed through re-education;
- that girls be trained to believe that to be intellectual or skillful in non-traditional areas is not unfeminine;
- that school boards adopt affirmative action plans for students as well as for employees; and
- that the Ministry of Education reaffirm its stand on sexual stereotyping and women's studies.

Ms. Fedorchuk concluded by emphasizing that the goal of her recommendations was to achieve an environment in which all children could develop their potential. She submitted an additional paper entitled "Gender Bias and Teacher Behaviour" for consideration by the Council.

In the discussion that followed, OSWC member Sandra Manzig asked whether some work could be accomplished through the Women's Centre at the College. Ms. Fedorchuk replied that while workshops and seminars were offered by the Centre they did not have the impact that a legislated affirmative action plan would have.

EDUCATION, TRADES AND TECHNOLOGY:

A brief presented by Elizabeth Poulin,
Confederation College, Thunder Bay

Ms. Poulin described the objectives, the client group and the problems associated with a program called Women in the Trades and Technology (WITT)

This program, which is funded by the federal and provincial governments, has been very effective in redirecting women to a broader field of employment. A typical client would be a woman aged 24-40, either single or married and living well below the poverty line, who has no maths or sciences training and was previously employed in clerical or service work. Ms. Poulin noted that WITT attempts to increase her awareness of the occupations available to her, convey the knowledge of specific skills in a variety of technologies and trades, achieve academic upgrading and acceptance of mathematics, and foster self-confidence and the desire for further training.

These this situation, Mr. Pedersen offered a number of

presented:

1. Greater bias in teacher behaviour be addressed

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12. Greater bias in teacher behaviour be addressed

EDUCATION, TRADES AND TECHNOLOGY:

Among the problems faced by graduates of WITT, Ms. Poulin listed the attitudes of the major primary resource employers, employees and unions, the difficulty in getting information about funding programs, the lack of affordable, accessible day care and the abysmal enforcement of maintenance orders arising from marriage breakdown.

To assist women such as those served by WITT, Ms. Poulin recommended:

- that mandatory Affirmative Action Programs be legislated;
- that there be an immediate increase in the number and variety of fully funded skills training programs for women in the area of trades and technology;
- that strong and accessible financial incentives be made available to employers hiring women in non-traditional work;
- that a specific female counsellor in each region in the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) be designated to provide the incentive, information and action necessary to get the training and employment programs moving;
- that outreach programs be developed for women in remote areas so that they are aware of training, re-training and funded employment possibilities;
- that career guidance counselling be provided throughout the educational system and that those providing the counselling be educated and trained to understand the changed role of women;
- that the Provincial Government's initiative "Open Doors" be funded to a level that provides the necessary resources and staff to accomplish its goals and objectives; and
- that affordable, accessible 24-hour child care be available for women who are training and working.

Ms. Poulin acknowledged that several of these items were not within provincial jurisdiction but expressed the hope that the provincial government could be persuaded to exercise its influence on the federal government.

In the discussion that followed, OSWC member Bill Kelloway queried whether guidelines produced by the Ministry of Education to cover these very important areas had been implemented.



EDUCATION, TRADES AND TECHNOLOGY:

Ruth Cunningham, Director of Equal Opportunities Programs at Confederation College, noted that although such guidelines did exist, they were not being implemented.

UPGRADING WOMEN:

A brief presented by Joan Baril,
Confederation College, Thunder Bay

Ms. Baril described the Basic Training for Skill Development Program (BTSD), its client group and the problems members have getting into and staying in the program.

BTSD, which offers basic skills training for adults in Mathematics, English and Science, Levels II, III and IV, caters mainly to women in their twenties who are high school dropouts and who have been working "in the female ghetto". These women, many of whom are raising children, recognize that their jobs are a dead-end and are committed to upgrading their skills.

Barriers to getting into BTSD, according to Ms. Baril, include unemployment insurance regulations which virtually prohibit attendance at school, ineligibility for student loans and grants, and the fact that part-time attendance disqualifies the client from sponsorship by CEIC or participation in the Technical Upgrading Program (TUP). To facilitate participation in BTSD, Ms. Baril recommended the provincial government:

1. Confer with the Federal Government to
 - a) consider the effects and possible benefits of allowing adults to access education while receiving UI benefits;
 - b) increase the number of CEIC places in BTSD, especially in the North;
 - c) allow existing technological programs in Northern Colleges to be considered as CEIC designated occupational courses so that women who access them may continue to receive UI benefits or receive a training allowance as well as free tuition. This would increase the number of vocational options for women in Northern centres;
 - d) strongly press CEIC to allow training allowances to be paid to part-time students.
2. Continue the TUP program. Allow part-time students to access TUP.

UPGRADING WOMEN:

3. Allow BTSD students to be eligible for Ontario Student Loan and Ontario Student Grants.
4. Relax the criteria for bursaries under the Ontario Special Benefits program. At present only women on Family Benefits receive the relatively small sum available here. However, to BTSD women, small amounts mean a lot. Allow needy women, for example, to be eligible for help with transportation costs.
5. Increase Family Benefits.
6. Design day care subsidies which are realistic in light of the cost of living in 1984. The purpose should be to allow needy parents to work or go to school. Set a cap on the percentage of net income which can be asked for day care. Requiring women to pay one third of their income to support one child in day care is exploitive and socially dysfunctional.
7. Aim to set up child care on campus, using flexible and innovative approaches, i.e., parents' co-operatives, work-sharing, etc. in order to reduce costs.
8. Study the extent of harassment of separated wives by husbands. Study the extent to which the perceived ineffectiveness of the local legal system to the problem of wife abuse is a fact. Publicize the results.
9. Consider ways the abused wife can enjoy in peace her home, children and possessions by effecting the removal of the batterer from the home, either to jail or elsewhere.
10. Continue support for social programs which aid abused women and children. This includes rape crisis, hostels and women's centres.
11. Set up mechanisms whereby BTSD women students can meet together to discuss common problems and share information, that is, networking sessions. Start with the assumption that women students, even though attending the same classes, are separated and silenced by many external taboos and internal self-censorships.

TRANSITION HOUSE SERVICES IN NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO:

A brief presented by Marg Kowalski on behalf of
the Violence Coalition of Northwestern Ontario

Ms. Kowalski summarized, for the benefit of the forum, the major points contained in the brief. Among the problems encountered by transition houses, she underlined the lack of recognition of sheltering as a needed service in the community, the delays in establishing shelters owing to a lack of designated zones for crisis housing and the absence of a secure funding source. She stressed that

TRANSITION HOUSE SERVICES IN NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO:

ongoing funding was essential to ensure adequate support for the victims of family violence and to plan community education and staff training and upgrading programs. Ms. Kowalski concluded by expressing concern about the family resource centre initiatives which were under way. She noted that the lack of consultation on these projects had created distrust and frustration, and expressed the fear that these centres would be municipal institutions instead of homes.

The discussion by OSWC members focussed on the fact that assault charges were not being laid by police officers despite the recent instructions to that effect from the Attorney General's office.

RURAL WOMEN'S CONCERNS:

A brief presented by Jacquelyn Hunsperger and Janet Owen, Rainy River District Rural Women

Ms. Hunsperger prefaced her elaboration of rural women's concerns by profiling the Rainy River District with respect to location, population, towns, schools, health care and social services. She described the stresses and strains that assail a farm wife in these tough economic times and demolished "the myth that the farm wife is a content and grateful homemaker who enjoys a simple and uncomplicated life."

Ms. Hunsperger argued for the increased availability of appropriate agricultural courses for both children and adults and underlined the need for a centralized trade school in northwestern Ontario so local youths could acquire skills while remaining in the area.

She emphasized the requirement for child care so women could subsidize the farm with off-the-farm income or accomplish farm chores. In this regard, Ms. Hunsperger suggested the establishment of day-care centres in the rural areas where children could be left for a couple of days a week, thereby freeing women for those farm tasks which take several days of concentrated labour to complete. On the subject of pensions, Ms. Hunsperger noted that financial deprivation suffered by farm women is compounded by their inability to contribute to any form of pension plan. She recommended that homemakers be allowed to contribute towards a pension plan of their own so they would have something other than the limited CPP of their husbands, along with the OAS and its supplement, to fall back on.

Ms. Hunsperger noted that financial constraints and a lack of leisure time often contribute to stress and to wife battering. She argued that community-based mental health clinics should be a priority in order to respond to this situation.

Ms. Hunsperger emphasized the isolation of farm families from educational and health facilities, from shopping areas and job

RURAL WOMEN'S CONCERNS:

opportunities. She suggested that travel expense assistance be made available when consultation with medical specialists in major centres is required, and noted that only an improvement in the economic situation would provide the relief to farm women that is required.

RURAL WOMEN'S CONCERNS:

A brief presented by Ena Skene of the
Oxdrift Branch of the Federated Women's
Institute of Ontario

Ms. Skene made a number of recommendations which, if implemented, would improve the lot of the rural women of the Dryden district. She suggested:

- that a Home Economist be appointed to the Dryden Office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food without delay;
- that a driver education program be established to help alleviate the isolation of rural women who do not drive;
- that courses of interest to women be offered on television;
- that shelter be provided for victims of wife batterers;
- that assistance with financial planning and training in bookkeeping and computers be provided; and
- that the Ministry of Agriculture and Food support the establishment of cottage industries with its expertise in marketing and organization.

Ms. Skene highlighted the problems caused by inadequate access to medical facilities and emphasized the need for professional upgrading for women who wish to work outside the home.

In the discussion that followed, the recommendation on the wider use of television was pinpointed as extremely valuable.

WOMEN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

A brief presented by Luan Wall of
the Economic Development Subcommittee
of the NWO Women's Decade Council

Ms. Wall prefaced her brief by supporting "legislation for both mandatory affirmative action and equal pay for work of equal value", a

WOMEN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

concept that she felt was especially important in northwestern Ontario where the resource extraction industries are historically not a major employer of women.

With respect to the specific topic of the brief, she said that the Economic Development Committee had looked at economic development holistically and so took into account the health of the entire community in its deliberations. She emphasized the value of looking at economic development in this wider context and underlined the particular qualifications of women to contribute to this process.

The Economic Development Subcommittee recommended:

- Legislated mandatory affirmative action and contract compliance.
- Legislated equal pay for work of equal value.
- Appointments to all policy and decision-making committees must come from all sectors of the community, including: homemakers, volunteer organizations, unions, corporations, small/medium business, governments, educators, and others. These appointments must be reflective of the gender distribution of the adult community population.
- Funding for child care so that women are free to take part in decision-making. That is, their being mothers must not be an impediment to their participation.
- Moral support from the province and its decision-makers is needed to acknowledge that women's experience is indeed a valuable asset. Leaders must encourage and support women's full participation in decision-making.

Ms. Wall emphasized that women wanted equal access to the decision-making processes that would affect the lives of their children.

REGIONAL HEALTH NEEDS SURVEY:

A brief presented by Margot Morgan of
the NWO Women's Health Education Project

Ms. Morgan prefaced her elaboration of regional health needs by reviewing how the NWO Health Education Project works. She noted that

REGIONAL HEALTH NEEDS SURVEY:

it was a three-year health promotion project sponsored by the Thunder Bay Women's Health Action Group and funded by the Health Promotion Directorate at Health and Welfare Canada. The project was directed at women in 13 northwestern Ontario communities and utilized a system of workshop delivery to facilitate an educational process which encouraged reliance on the participant's own experiences. Assumptions underlying the project were that women were not satisfied with the health care they were receiving, that they seek out attention more frequently than do men and that there is a need for them to take greater responsibility for their own health care.

Ms. Morgan highlighted for the forum several of the problems which were identified in greater detail in the brief. Among these were the pervasive problem with the availability of service, the lack of institutional support for health promotion and the burden of travelling to medical care in distant centres. In addition, lack of transportation, lack of community facilities, poor job prospects, lack of day care and the poor state of the community economy all contributed to stress.

To begin to address the health needs identified in the workshops and through a project survey, Ms. Morgan recommended the use of alternative health care delivery and services in northwestern Ontario such as nurse practitioners, midwives and a system of well-care health centres.

Copies of the survey material were made available to the Advisory Council.

WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES:

A brief presented by Helen Schumacher on behalf of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO), Lakehead Chapter

Ms. Schumacher's brief focussed on the need for:

- more emphasis on health promotion and illness prevention;
- the establishment of cost-effective community-based health services;
- better mental health services; and
- insured travel costs and the provision of insured home care in the health services.

WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES:

In Ms. Schumacher's view, an increased emphasis on health promotion would entail the hiring of more public health nurses, the establishment of well-person clinics and the effective use of the media to convey health promotion perspectives.

She argued that community-based health services could reduce costs and eliminate some of the problems which occur when doctors are the first line of entry to the health care system. The centres could be operated by nurse practitioners who, after making an initial assessment, would refer the patient to the appropriate resource person. In addition, the centres would provide a continuum of service in areas where the turnover of doctors is high.

With respect to better mental health services, Ms. Schumacher pointed to the need for:

- easily obtainable counselling services on a 24-hour basis;
- subsidized single unit housing so that the patient can live on her own in the community;
- job readiness training and sheltered workshops;
- assistance with job finding;
- increased promotion of research;
- more promotion of research into the causes, diagnoses and treatment of mental disorders;
- better pensions for the mentally unstable who are unable to work; and
- the promotion of a whole new attitude towards mental health problems.

Ms. Schumacher's final point embraced two issues: the need for coverage of travel costs incurred in the course of obtaining medical services and the requirement for insured homecare services. With respect to the first of these, she noted that citizens in isolated areas are penalized when they become ill because they must pay transportation costs before receiving care. With respect to the second, she noted that many would not need institutional or hospital care if more home support services were available.

Ms. Schumacher concluded by emphasizing the cost-effective features of a health promotion approach and urged the OSWC to convey the RNAO's recommendations to the government.

PROFESSIONAL NURSES' CONCERNS:

A brief presented by Rhoda Dickson on behalf of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, Region 12

This presentation focussed on ways to enhance the job satisfaction of registered nurses and encourage their continuing education. The recommended measures, if implemented, would have the effect of encouraging nurses to return to full-time employment and raise the level of the care they provide.

Ms. Dickson profiled a typical RNAO member and listed the problems which hinder the effective and enjoyable performance of the duties for which she was trained. Among these were a lack of child care, a lack of career mobility, limited educational opportunities, low salaries and the lack of opportunity to work as a primary health care worker.

To address these concerns, Ms. Dickson recommended:

- that nursing services should be an insured health service;
- that adequate funding for orientation of new nursing employees in health care agencies be provided by the Ministry of Health;
- that the District Health Councils employ a nurse to promote, co-ordinate and deliver continuing education for nursing personnel in northwestern Ontario;
- that improved child-care facilities be available;
- that the required number (8), for extension courses for Lakehead University, be reduced;
- that financial incentives be given to nurses pursuing post-diploma nursing education;
- that more financial assistance be provided by the Government of Ontario to nurses pursuing post-diploma education when they are willing to return to northwestern Ontario to work;
- that a Master's program in nursing be developed at Lakehead University;
- that salaries for nurses be increased to reflect the value of nursing services to society;
- that salaries for nurses working in community health and nursing homes be at least equal to salaries for hospital-based nurses; and

PROFESSIONAL NURSES' CONCERNS:

- that nurses in northwestern Ontario be paid an isolation bonus.

WEQUEDONG MEDICAL HOSTEL:

A brief presented by Bernice Heald of
the Thunder Bay Anishnabequek

This brief argued for the OSWC's support of the bid of the Thunder Bay Anishnabequek for provincial assistance in the establishment of a medical hostel. Ms. Heald reviewed the difficulties faced by residents of Northern Ontario, and particularly by Native people, in accessing health care. The great distances that must be travelled, the high cost of travel and accommodation, the cultural and language barriers between the Native individual and health care professionals all conspired to produce a situation which resulted in inadequate care for these residents.

Ms. Heald emphasized that several studies and surveys had identified the need for a medical hostel to address these concerns and yet the provincial Minister of Health had not yet acknowledged responsibility in this matter. She asked for the assistance of the OSWC in bringing this matter to the attention of the provincial government so that co-operation between both levels of government might take place and result in the allocation of the necessary funds.

WOMEN AND DISABILITIES:

A brief presented by Luan Wall of the
Women and Disabilities Subcommittee of
the NWO Women's Decade Council

Ms. Wall informed the forum that the Women and Disabilities Subcommittee had been struck in the early part of the year to look at the concerns of women with physical disabilities in northwestern Ontario. These women, she noted, encounter prejudices both as women and as persons with a disability. A lack of job opportunity, non-existent transport to those jobs that do exist and the inaccessibility of most public buildings combine to isolate the disabled woman. A lack of self-esteem and poverty are two obvious consequences of this situation. Other factors contributing to their isolation are the lack of adequate expertise on sexuality, poor medical care owing to the high cost of travel and accommodation given OHIP's policy of not insuring the travel costs associated with medical care, and the high costs of mobility aids such as wheelchairs.

Ms. Wall stressed that the most potent barrier to the full participation of the disabled was the ignorance of the general public. She concluded by informing the forum of a conference planned for April 1985 to highlight these issues and asked for the OSWC's support in this endeavor.

WOMEN AND PENSIONS:

A brief presented by Lynn Beak of the NWO
Women's Decade Council Subcommittee on Pensions

Ms. Beak prefaced her recommendations by noting that the pension reforms contemplated by the Federal and Ontario Governments were insufficient to address the income security needs of elderly women. In addition, she warned that these "meagre reforms on the horizon may be used to obscure the urgent need for continuing and truly comprehensive pension reform." She noted that the Subcommittee's brief focussed on the issues inherent in the Ontario proposals which seemed to rely on the private pension industry to meet previously unmet needs. Ms. Beak said the Subcommittee had not been persuaded that the private pension industry would significantly redress existing problems and argued for expansion of the public system.

The Subcommittee recommended:

- that the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans be expanded to give benefits equal to fifty percent of earnings up to the average industrial wage;
- that equal splitting of pension credits between spouses on divorce or after three years of separation be mandatory, automatic and not subject to renunciation;
- that homemakers be included in the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan as contributors in their own right; and
- that the position advanced by the majority report of the Canada Pension Plan Advisory Committee re drop-out and drop-in provisions should form the basis of adequate pension reform.

Ms. Beak stated that the Subcommittee welcomed the Ontario proposals to improve disability and survivor benefits but stressed that greater attention must be given to the needs and problems of women between the ages of 50-59 and 60-64.

Ms. Beak emphasized the need for continuing advocacy in this area.

The discussion that followed presentation of the brief focussed on the different ways of funding pensions for homemakers depending on whether they have children or not, the income security problems of women over 50 and the issue of the vesting of part-time pensions.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S CONCERNS:

A brief presented by Leena Pesonen,
Immigrant Information Centre, Thunder Bay

Ms. Pesonen told the forum that immigrant women are often "discriminated against by mainstream institutions, exploited in the workplace and, in many instances, oppressed and abused at home." One of their chief problems is the language barrier and access to training; women who are privately sponsored are ineligible for English as a Second Language (ESL) courses and for subsidized day care. Consequently they must either find a well-paying job or stay at home.

Ms. Pesonen noted that immigrant women are often trapped in a traditional life style at home and are involved in employment which does not foster the acquisition of language skills. As a result, these women are isolated from other members of the work force and from their own families who usually have a greater opportunity to learn the language. This situation leads to feelings of insecurity, isolation, fear and resentment.

In an attempt to respond to this situation, the Thunder Bay Immigrant Information Centre offers free ESL courses, general orientation classes and a pre-employment orientation program. However, these services are not available to residents of the smaller communities.

Ms. Pesonen suggested that a program such as Adult Workplace English would allow women already working to learn the language for a short period each day at their place of employment. She concluded by stressing the need to provide supports to these women as they make the transition to Canadian society.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN:

A brief presented by Joan Williams of
the Down to Business Training Program
in Thunder Bay

Ms. Williams described the Down to Business Training Program in Thunder Bay, a 48-week program which trains immigrant women in business and English skills and on-the-job training in the community. The program, which is funded by the Job Corps Program of the Employment Development Branch of CEIC, pays women an hourly wage for training in work-specific English language and generic office skills which include computer literacy, word processing, business math, bookkeeping and job search and life skills. The program provides "a much-needed link between the language programs that exist and the Canadian work world."

Ms. Williams echoed Ms. Pesonen's remarks on the importance of language training and the difficulties faced by women sponsored as family class or assisted relatives. These women are not eligible for CEIC training allowances, day-care subsidies, social services, welfare or subsidized housing. And the precarious financial situation of

IMMIGRANT WOMEN:

their families often requires that the woman forfeit the development of language skills in the interests of bringing in an income, however minimal.

Ms. Williams noted that the Down to Business Training Program not only provides graduates with the skills that they need to achieve equality in the workplace, but prepares them for the racial discrimination and sexism which they will inevitably meet.

SINGLE PARENT MOTHERS:

A brief presented by Jeanne Wilmot
of Thunder Bay

Ms. Wilmot reviewed the factors which conspire against responsible parenting and argued for recognition of the contribution of mothers who rear their children full time. She recommended an increase in Family Allowance to a minimum of \$45.00 a month and payment of a Mother's Benefit which could be partially applied, deductible at source, on a mandatory basis, as a contribution to the Canada Pension Plan.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING NEEDS OF NATIVE WOMEN IN ONTARIO:

A brief presented by Christi Bannon of
the Ontario Native Women's Association

Ms. Bannon's brief focussed on ten recommendations which evolved as a result of a survey on the training and employment needs of Native Women in Ontario. Two hundred and fifty Native women were interviewed for the survey in twenty-three native communities across Ontario. Half of these were in Northern Ontario.

The brief recommended that:

- the provision of training and upgrading programs in non-traditional job categories for the native women in their communities in Ontario be instituted immediately;
- CEIC extend training programs to women of smaller communities and provide upgrading programs to women in their home communities;
- more focus be placed on Basic Job Readiness Training and more emphasis be placed on retention of the basic skills training programs;
- a 24-hour child-care service be provided to facilitate and promote women's access to training and employment and for those jobs involving shift work. Also that infant care facilities be provided for women with children under 2 years of age;

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING NEEDS OF NATIVE WOMEN IN ONTARIO:

- CEIC structure its programs and services in such a way to be accessible to native women, and that Indian leaders and Native women organizations be consulted in this structuring process;
- social assistance agencies give support to native women making the transition from former social assistance to independence over a set period of time until adequate budgetary practices and habits have been acquired;
- the training allowances be increased to accommodate the needs of the native woman, and also that the training allowance be reflective of the cost of living in the area and at least equivalent to the minimum wage requirement;
- planning and technical expertise be provided to native communities to identify and implement long-term employment programs;
- the level and quality of services provided by Canada Employment Centres and Native counsellors be examined immediately to ensure that adequate measures are taken to establish a better relationship between the Native woman client and Native counsellor, and that a follow-up process be developed and implemented immediately to generate a positive atmosphere in clientele relationships;
- a "tutoring" segment be established in all training courses (programs), so that Native women experiencing difficulties can have these problems identified immediately and that monitors be in place to facilitate the success rate of Native women.

Ms. Bannon then read the brief which had been presented to Judge Abella of the Commission of Inquiry on Equality in Employment. The brief, which contained recommendations to address problems relating to Native women's participation in the labour force, suggested:

- Sensitivity awareness training for managers and staff to have a better understanding of the Native perspective.
- Training courses or programs that focus on the Native segment should have Native input into the design and content. Also, provisions to be made for participants to have regular family leave when training is away from their communities.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING NEEDS OF NATIVE WOMEN IN ONTARIO:

- Major focus to be made on the northern isolated communities to help alleviate the serious social problems that exist by specific allocation of program monies in these areas in terms of training dollars and job creation allotments.
- Co-ordination between the social agencies and Federal and Provincial governments whereby the individual is not hindered in completing training or continuing their employment.
- All jobs within the Federal system to go through the normal channels, i.e., where a vacancy occurs the services of the Canada Employment Centres, the Native Employment offices of the Public Service Commission to be used for referral in filling vacancies, thereby eliminating the screening out of Native clients.
- The promoting and encouraging of Native women to establish enterprises in businesses through the Native Economic Development Fund. It is recommended that specific funds from the Native Economic Development Fund be set aside annually for the duration of the program for Native women initiatives.

Ms. Bannon noted that copies of the survey report were available from the Ontario Native Women's Association office in Thunder Bay.

In the discussion that followed it was acknowledged that many of the issues were federal ones and that the OSWC might simply forward the brief to the appropriate federal authorities with its support.

PORNOGRAPHY:

A brief presented by Fiona Karlstedt of the Northern Women's Centre

Ms. Karlstedt made a strong plea for recognition of the politics of pornography and argued for its regulation in order to protect children from exposure to its message.

According to Ms. Karlstedt, the sexual objectification of women in pornography is linked to the limitations placed on their social, economic and political advancement. Her analysis posited "a continuum from sex roles stereotyping in advertising to soft and hard core pornography."

She underlined the difficulty of arriving at a commonly accepted definition of pornography and noted that the law's concern was solely with obscenity, that is "the offensiveness of public sexuality, and not with the dehumanizing effect" pornography has on women.

PORNOGRAPHY:

Ms. Karlstedt described pornography's characteristics and reviewed the three major theories traditionally offered by social scientists to explain its popularity. All three, she noted, regarded pornography as a harmless or even positive force. The feminist analysis, however, recognized the direct causal link between violent pornography and violence against women and the more generalized effect on attitudes and beliefs about them. She emphasized that the lack of objective proof on harmful effects in no way denied their existence.

Ms. Karlstedt pointed to the increasing use of violence and children in pornography and argued for the regulation of its display and accessibility in retail outlets. She noted that censorship, though inviting, would only drive the material underground and so would not be ultimately effective.

She concluded by stressing that pornography is not about sexuality or "pictures". It's about "the obscene use of power, the physical and psychic violence done to one human being by another." She exhorted those attending the forum to understand the politics of pornography and to teach others to be knowledgeable consumers as well.

The discussion that followed this presentation touched on a number of items:

- 1) It was acknowledged that many of the women who participate in the production of pornography perceive themselves as having little choice owing to their economic situation.
- 2) Ms. Karlstedt noted that charging the retailer only serves to make him a martyr and forces the material underground; it does nothing to eradicate the point of view that caused it to be produced.

PORNOGRAPHY:

A brief presented by Yvonne Hastings on behalf
of the Dryden Federation of Women Teachers

Ms. Hastings noted that her organization supported neither the anti-censorship point of view nor the demand for widespread banning of pornographic material.

It did however propose certain measures in order to protect children from exposure to this material. It recommended:

1. The Canadian Broadcasting Act should be amended to include "or sex" in the following requirement:

"No station, network or operator or pay television licensee shall broadcast any abusive pictorial representation of any race, religion, creed or sex."

PORNOGRAPHY:

2. Videotapes which are shown on television or are available for rent should be classified and restricted in the same way as movies now are. The Provincial Attorneys General should be requested to set up the mechanisms for such classifications to be made.
3. The federal government should encourage municipal governments to establish acceptable controls for the distribution and display of adult materials so that they are out of the reach and view of youngsters under the age of 18.
4. The Criminal Code of Canada should be amended so that a clear definition of pornography is provided. Either the definition of "obscene" should be amended to cover "any publication a characteristic of which is the undue exploitation of any one or more of the following subjects, namely, violence, crime, horror, cruelty, sex and human degradation" and that "where one or more persons depicted is a child it shall be deemed to be undue exploitation of sex" and that "child" means a person under age 18 or depicted as under that age, or a suitable and inclusive new definition of pornography should be provided in the Criminal Code, so that judges will be able to rule within that definition without having to guess what "acceptable community standards" might be.

DAY CARE:

A brief presented by Margot Morgan of
the NWO Women's Health Education Project

Ms. Morgan submitted the brief on day care to the Council without summarizing its contents. She did, however, inform the forum that the Day-care Committee at the Women's Centre in Thunder Bay had just completed a needs assessment survey and its report on it would be available within the month. She noted that the community forums that were a part of the study had not attracted many women. She indicated that this underlined the day-care problems of women with small children.

CLOSING DISCUSSION

Other issues were raised:

- 1) Loreen Kanderra of the CBC informed the forum that a jury trial in Thunder Bay had convicted the Film Factory on obscenity charges thus highlighting the fact that individuals other than judges are having an input into the Canadian standard of obscenity.
- 2) Rhoda Dickson of Fort Frances and OSWC member Kay Toyer of Burlington exchanged information on establishing

CLOSING DISCUSSION

out-patient programs relating to alcohol and drug abuse.

- 3) The NWO Women's Decade Council presented the following resolution:

Whereas, the Ministry of Northern Affairs (M.N.A.) is a co-ordinating provincial ministry to reflect northern residents' concerns and issues, and

Whereas, women of the north continue to voice their concerns and request consultation and input with this ministry, and

Whereas, the Minister and/or delegates were specifically invited to participate in this forum,

Be It Resolved that the Ontario Advisory Council on the Status of Women use their resources to pressure that a consultation be held between the Honourable Leo Bernier and the Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council prior to the end of 1984.

This resolution is to be followed up in six months (February, 1985) in order to assess the progress made.

CLOSING REMARKS

Ms. Ryan accepted the NWO Women's Decade Council's resolution on behalf of the Ontario Status of Women Council. It would be presented to OSWC as a whole and she felt confident it would be forwarded to Mr. Bernier.

Ms. Ryan then reviewed the follow-up to this forum. The proceedings had been taped and a transcript would be made. Following this, a report would be prepared and available upon request. The report and all the briefs would go to the Honourable Robert Welch, Minister responsible for Women's Issues and to the Honourable Leo Bernier, Minister for Northern Affairs. In addition, the report and relevant briefs would be sent to the Ministers and to the OSWC committees concerned with the issue. As well, both the report and individual briefs would be available from the OSWC office to delegates and others upon request. Follow-up activity would be reported in the OSWC's newsletter.

Ms. Ryan closed the forum with a vote of thanks to all the participants and to those who had helped in the organization of the forum.



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